

WASHINGTON, D.C. On Sunday, July 17, Congressman Sanford Bishop led a delegation of Georgians at the Washington National Cathedral where he served as Georgia's flag-bearer during Georgia State Day, a worship service celebrating the people and leaders of the Peach State.

More than 250 people traveled from Georgia (or were natives of the state now living in the Washington Area) to join the nearly 1,000 congregants at the Washington National Cathedral, where the nation has celebrated presidential inaugurals, mourned the death of leaders at state funerals and marked tragedies like the September 11, 2001 terrorist attacks.

The combined choirs of St. Thomas Episcopal Church in Columbus and St. Mark's Episcopal Church of Lagrange performed a half-hour musical prelude, which included Georgia-flavored spirituals and psalms, one written by Hamilton Smith, an Atlanta based composer.

The Rev. Dr. Joanna M. Adams, pastor of Morningside Presbyterian Church in Atlanta, served as guest preacher and delivered a moving sermon in which she urged the congregation to ponder the parable in which an enemy sows weeds amidst a farmer's wheat. She preached that the parable's message of tolerance can be reflected in the everyday lives of Georgians as well as the public policy decisions of national and international leaders. (The full text of the sermon is available at [www.cathedral.org](http://www.cathedral.org).) The Right Rev. Henry I. Louittit, Bishop of the Savannah-based Episcopal Diocese of Georgia, celebrated the Eucharist.

Following the service, Congressman Bishop addressed the crowd of Georgians at a reception held in the state's honor. He read a proclamation from Governor Sonny Perdue and presented a certificate of Special Congressional Recognition.

"In our area, I tell my colleagues in Congress we believe in God, country, work and family," Congressman Bishop said. "Those are our values and certainly this day has represented that."

Other Georgians played roles at the service. Brent Taylor of Saint Simons Island, read Scripture. Tuyet Tran of Morrow, Marquette McKnight of Columbus, Eston and Peggy Ann Melton of Clayton, delivered gifts to the altar as oblation bearers. Annabelle Coyne, 6, and Madelyn Coyne, 5, of Athens, served as oblation bearers.

In 1791, when Congress selected Washington, DC as the capital of the United States, President George Washington commissioned Major Pierre l'Enfant to design an overall plan for the future seat of government. Included in l'Enfant's plan was a church, "intended for national purposes, such as public prayer, thanksgiving, funeral orations, etc., and assigned to the special use of no particular Sect or denomination, but equally open to all." In 1893 President Benjamin Harrison signed a charter to the Protestant Episcopal Cathedral Foundation of the District of Columbia allowing it to establish a cathedral and institutions of higher learning. The first stone of the

National Cathedral was laid in 1907 and construction continued for eighty-three years.

Today the National Cathedral continues to serve as a place of national focus, opening its doors to people of all faiths as they gather to worship and pray, to mourn the passing of world leaders, and to confront the pressing moral and social issues of the day.

As part of its national ministry, the Cathedral has for many years individually honored each state in the union, each Sunday praying for the government and people of one state, honoring every state in the union once each year. The state flag flies on the chancel steps, and at the 11 am service, special seating is reserved for State Day visitors.

In January 1996, the Washington National Cathedral initiated enhanced Major State Day celebrations on the third Sunday of each month, which offers each state in the union the opportunity to participate in an expanded celebration once every four years. These celebrations offer additional opportunities for citizens of the designated state to participate more fully in the worship service and in the life of the Washington National Cathedral.